

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 16, 2014

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write to urge your full attention to the outrageous Sudanese court ruling that sentenced Meriam Yahya Ibrahim Ishag to death by hanging for her religious beliefs. We request your immediate action and full diplomatic engagement to offer Meriam political asylum and to secure her and her son's safe release.

This week, a court in Khartoum sentenced Meriam, 27, to be flogged for adultery for marrying a Christian man and to be hanged to death for refusing to renounce her Christian faith. According to news reports, Meriam is currently eight months pregnant with her second child, and has been imprisoned along with her 20-month old toddler since February. Meriam is married to Daniel Wani, an American citizen who has ties to New Hampshire. Meriam was reportedly born to a Sudanese Muslim father and was raised as a Christian by her Ethiopian Orthodox mother.

We also urge you and President Obama to reappoint an Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, whose primary purpose is to monitor, prevent, and respond to this exact type of incident.

Thank you for your attention to this letter, and we respectfully request a prompt response regarding the actions taken by the Department of State to secure Meriam's freedom.

Sincerely,


Roy Blunt
United States Senator


Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator